

rich woods on moist circumneutral soils contain Atlantic isopyrum (*Isopyrum biternatum* = *Enemion biternatum*) and Douglass' bittercress (*Cardamine douglassii*), two state significantly rare species and ginseng (*Panax quinquefolium*), a state special concern species. Other uncommon plants found here include James' sedge (*Carex jamesii*), glade fern (*Athyrium pycnocarpon*), walking fern (*Asplenium rhizophyllum*), baneberry (*Actea pachypoda*) and Dutchmen's breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*), many of which are disjunct (separated from the region in which they are common) from the mountains. This is one of the most visited sites for wildflowers in the county (Natural Heritage Program 1986).

Some degradation of the lower areas has occurred since the original inventory, with both erosion and siltation occurring during the wet season.

Cabin Branch Bottomlands, L-4, is a young-aged bottomland forest dominated by hardwoods: white oak (*Quercus alba*), cherrybark oak (*Quercus pagoda*), swamp chestnut oak (*Quercus michauxii*), willow oak (*Quercus phellos*), overcup oak (*Quercus lyrata*), sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*) and American elm (*Ulmus americana*). Both the understory and the shrub layer are open. In the wetter portions of the floodplain occurs a population of Douglass' bittercress (*Cardamine douglassii*), a significantly rare species found on fewer than 15 sites in North Carolina, six of which are in Durham County. In slightly better drained sites, Lewis' heartleaf (*Hexastylis lewisii*) is found. This species is endemic to North Carolina and Virginia and is found on only 41 sites in both states. It is found at three sites in Durham County. It is a state-listed candidate species. On a slope just past the confluence of Cabin Branch and Little River is a population of *Trillium cuneatum* var. *luteum*, a rare species for the lower Piedmont and the only known site for this species in Durham County. The slopes both east and west of Snow Hill Road are excellent for spring wildflowers.

PROTECTION STATUS AND THREATS:

This tract is owned by the Corps of Engineers and is leased as gamelands by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. Willie Duke's Bluff and the adjoining tracts of Basic Mesic Forest that occur along the south side of the river below Penny's Bend are registered as the Catsburg Natural Area.

Apart from the special protection given to the natural area, most of this area is subject to timbering and other forms of management intended primarily for the benefit of just a few game species.

CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS:

The NC Wildlife Resources Commission should be encouraged to manage this area for all of its native animals, non-game as well as game species. Large tracts should be allowed to develop into mature stands of hardwoods and the creation of wood duck habitat should be left up to the beavers rather than through the creation of artificial sub-impoundments.